

Editorial

The American Dental Society of Anesthesiology:

The Past, the Present and the Future

■ As the American Dental Society of Anesthesiology concluded its fourth annual meeting in Miami Beach, there was a renewed feeling of unanimity of purpose among the officers and members of the Society and its component chapters.

The new president of the Society is a professor of anesthesia at a dental school; the first vice president is a professor of oral surgery who has done extensive research in the field of anesthesiology; the second vice president is a general practitioner; the secretary specializes in the use of general anesthesia to handle unusually difficult dental patients; the treasurer is affiliated with the faculty of a dental school and practices oral surgery; the chairman of the advisory board is a past president of the American Dental Association; and the editor is affiliated with a number of publications which represent organized dentistry. The Society is governed by a group of men who have devoted their professional lives to the advancement of dentistry.

It is important to note that the name of the society is the American Dental Society of *Anesthesiology*, not *Anesthesiologists*. We do not pretend to be a society for *anesthesiologists*. Our objectives are to elevate the standards of anesthesia practice for all dentists, including the practitioner who uses only regional anesthesia as well as the dentist who is well trained in general anesthesia.

Anesthesia is a field of dental practice which serves the entire profession. Almost all dentists, regardless of mode of practice or specialty, depend upon advancements in the field of anesthesiology to provide better care for their patients. Therefore, anesthesiology is not regarded by the A.D.S.A. as a *specialty* of dentistry.

The A.D.S.A. is made up of general practitioners and specialists in various fields of dentistry. Although there is no official tie between the A.D.S.A. and the A.D.A., the A.D.S.A. is working with the Section on Anesthesiology of the A.D.A. and is cooperating with organized dentistry.

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The true challenge of the present and the future is in the field of education. Dental educators must acknowledge the importance of a well-rounded predental education and encourage students to finish four years of college before entering dental school. This will give them a broader appreciation of the society of which dentistry is a part. The granting of Bachelor's degrees by "professional option" should be discouraged. This practice places a stigma of meaninglessness on their presentation.

Within the dental schools, the students should be familiarized with all aspects of dental practice so that they will understand the interdependence of specialized fields within the profession. If a student decides to limit his practice to one field, he will then have a deeper appreciation for his own responsibilities, not only as a specialist, but as a dentist.

Continued cooperation between dental education and other agencies in organized dentistry is necessary for the profession to meet the challenges of the future with integrity and imagination.

BRUCE L. DOUGLAS.

The American Dental Society of Anesthesiology:

The Past, the Present and the Future (cont'd from page 6)

Since the A.D.S.A. influenced the House of Delegates of the A.D.A. to establish a separate Section on Anesthesiology, it has worked unofficially to enlarge and improve the anesthesia program of the annual A.D.A. meetings. The A.D.S.A. now has an official working relationship with the American Society of Oral Surgeons. Its membership, individually and collectively, is working in many spheres of activity to advance anesthesiology in dentistry — politically, academically and scientifically.

In summary, the American Dental Society of Anesthesiology is made up of dentists, not anesthesiologists, with an interest in the advancement of anesthesiology in dentistry. The Society is striving to continue to improve the standards of care for the dental patient through this advancement. This advancement depends in great part upon an effective working relationship between the A.D.S.A. and other organized agencies in medicine and dentistry with similar objectives.

B.L.D.